



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2005

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Kind Blasts Pentagon for Blaming Military Budget Woes on Nation's Veterans

Bush Administration supports tax cuts for the wealthy over commitment to veterans

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) today released the following statement in reaction to comments made by Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, David Chu. Chu was quoted as saying that military pensions, health insurance and benefits for widows and retirees “have gotten to the point where they are harmful. They are taking away from the nation’s ability to defend itself.” *

“Undersecretary Chu’s comments are very disturbing to those of us who value the service of our veterans to this country and believe they have earned their right to basic pension and healthcare benefits,” stated Kind. “It is plain wrong to blame military budget woes on our veterans when this Administration’s irresponsible fiscal record is the real reason we have record deficits.”

Rep. Kind noted that earlier this week, House Republican leadership removed the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee because he has stood up for veterans, and now one of President Bush’s Defense Undersecretaries is accusing veterans of being ‘harmful’ to American defense operations.

“I am concerned that this is a preview of a partisan plan to cut veterans’ benefits in order to compensate for this Administration’s fiscal mismanagement,” stated Kind. “Furthermore, what does it say about the Administration’s priorities that government can afford to give tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, but it can’t afford to honor the commitment to our nation’s veterans? And what kind of message does this send to our servicemen and women, not to mention potential recruits?”

Kind is an original cosponsor of the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act of 2005 to guarantee funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system based on the number of veterans it serves and the medical inflation rate for hospitals. Kind has also been unrelenting in the fight to eliminate the disabled veteran’s tax, otherwise known as concurrent receipt, and the reduction for military widows under the survivor benefit plan.

“Our commitment to our soldiers and their families does not end when they return home,” said Kind. “It is particularly critical to ensure veterans’ benefits in a time of war. As I have in the past, I will work to protect the benefits earned by our veterans for their brave service to our country.”

* *Wall Street Journal*, “Balancing Act: As Benefits for Veterans Climb, Military Spending Feels Squeeze,” 01/25/05.